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ABSTRACT

Involving students in drawing activities prior to writing helps them to visualize what they want to express in their writing. Drawing before writing makes writing an easier process. In this lesson, K-2 students learn story elements, use graphic organizers, and access the Internet to gather factual information about frogs and toads. During the two- to three-week lesson time, students will: learn about story elements, including setting, characters, problem, solution, and ending; use a K-W-L chart to activate prior knowledge and inquiry; use the Internet to gather information about a specific topic; express stories orally applying their knowledge of story elements; apply their knowledge of story elements through drawings; apply strategies learned in oral expression to reading and writing; and record finished stories using PowerPoint. The instructional plan, lists of resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. A K-W-L chart and form for recording story elements are attached. (RS)

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From Fact to Fiction: Drawing and Writing Stories

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Grade Band

K-2

Estimated Lesson Time

Two to three weeks

Overview

Getting children to use their imaginations when writing a story can sometimes be difficult. Drawing, however, can create a bridge between the ideas in a child's head and the blank piece of paper on the desk. In this lesson, students use factual information gathered from the Internet as the basis for creating a nonfiction story. Story elements, including setting, characters, problem, solution, and endings, are then used as a structure for assembling students' ideas into a story.

From Theory to Practice

Sidelnick, M.A. & Svoboda, M.L. (2000). The bridge between drawing and writing: Hannah's story. *The Reading Teacher, 54*(2), 174-184.

Vygotsky (1978) stated that children's drawings capitalize on the narrative impulse that emerges in their earliest representational drawings, on their tendency to create stories in drawings, and on the talk that surrounds and supplements drawing events. This talk allows teachers to engage the student in the literacy setting, and provides opportunities for questioning, directing, assessing, instructing, and praising the student.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Student Objectives

Students will

- Learn about story elements, including setting, characters, problem, solution, and ending
- Use a K-W-L chart to activate prior knowledge and inquiry
- Use the Internet to gather information about a specific topic
- Express stories orally applying their knowledge of story elements
- Apply their knowledge of story elements through drawings
- Apply strategies learned in oral expression to reading and writing
- Record finished stories using PowerPoint

Resources

- **Student materials:**

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K-W-L chart

Story Elements handout

Interactive Venn diagram

PowerPoint

- **Websites about frogs and toads:**

  Frogland

  The Somewhat Amusing World of Frogs

  Westward Frog

  Frogs and Toads of Florida

- **Books:**

  Little Frog's Monster Story by Anna Deren (Modern Curriculum Press, 1981)

  Frog or Toad? by Patricia A. Lynch (Silver Burdett Ginn, 1996)

  The Wide Mouthed Frog by Andrea Butler (Mimosa Publications, 1989)

Instructional Plan

Preparation

To prepare for this lesson, it is necessary to teach students about the elements of a story, including setting, characters, problem, solution, and ending. Use a picture book like *Little Frog's Monster Story* to review these elements. After reading the book, ask questions such as:

- Where does the story take place or happen? **(Setting)**
- Who are the characters in the story? **(Characters)**
- What is the problem? **(Problem)**
- How is the problem solved? **(Solution)**
- How does the story end? **(Ending)**

Instruction

NOTE: This lesson is designed for small- or whole-group instruction, not center work.

1. After reading *Little Frog's Monster Story* and discussing the story elements, use the K-W-L chart to determine what students already know about frogs and toads. Record their responses in the K column of the chart. In the W column, record what students want to learn. The L column will be used to record new information that students' learn after reading and visiting websites.

2. Read the book *Frog or Toad?* and record any new information that students' learn in the L column of the chart.

3. Have students visit the following websites to gather more information about frogs and toads:

   - Frogland

- The Somewhat Amusing World of Frogs
- Westward Frog
- Frogs and Toads of Florida

Depending on students' abilities, you may need to read the information aloud from these websites. Add any new information to the L column of the K-W-L chart.

4. Have students access the interactive Venn diagram. Label one circle "frogs" and the other one "toads." Have students list characteristics of frogs and toads focusing on how they are different. In the middle section, focus on how frogs and toads are alike. Students should print their Venn diagram when finished.

5. Model how to create a story using one piece of information about frogs and toads. For example, frogs have smooth skin and toads have bumpy skin. While modeling, using setting, characters, problem, solution, and ending to create the story.

6. Using one piece of information from their Venn diagram printout, students begin generating their own creative stories about frogs and toads. Have each student choose one piece of information and verbalize a story aloud.

7. After each child has verbalized a story, distribute the Story Elements handout, which lists each of the story elements with a space to draw a picture. Instruct students to draw pictures that capture the story that they verbalized to the class. After pictures are drawn, students can share their drawings and stories with the class.

8. Have students begin independent writing. To get students started, model an appropriate beginning for a story or provide a uniform beginning, such as "Once upon a time . . ." During this writing activity, do not place emphasis on spelling.

9. After independent writing is done, conference with each student about his or her story. This will provide you an opportunity to teach spelling, sentence construction, flow of the story, and inclusion of story elements.

10. After conferencing, students should revise their story, make corrections, and submit a finished version.

11. If technology is available, scan students' drawings into the computer to create PowerPoint slides. Students then record their stories on the slides to accompany each drawing. They can also assess their writing and set goals for their next project (see Student Assessment/Reflections).

12. To bring the lesson to a conclusion, have students read *The Wide-Mouthed Frog*.

Student Assessment/Reflections

- Observe student's ability to express thoughts in a story using elements, such as setting, characters, problem, solution, and ending.
- Observe student's ability to connect information that is verbalized and drawn to written text.
- Observe student's use of graphic organizers to assist with the structuring of his or her information and stories: K-W-L chart, Story Elements handout, and the interactive Venn diagram printout.
- During conferencing, make note of students who are picking up on spelling patterns, sentence

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structure, and good writing strategies.

- After creating the PowerPoint presentations of the students' stories, have each student assess his or her reading and writing abilities. Ask each student to set goals for both areas. These goals can be written as speaker's notes within the PowerPoint presentation. During the next project, students can assess whether their writing has improved.

IRA/NCTE Standards

3 - Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

4 - Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

5 - Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

6 - Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

7 - Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8 - Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

12 - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

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K-W-L CHART

What I know	What I want to find out	What did I learn? What do I still want to know?

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STORY ELEMENTS

Name:_____ Title:_____

Setting:

Characters:

Problem:

Solution:

Ending:

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